THE CREATION OF MAN AND THE CREATION OF THE KING

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The story of the creation of mankind in Gen 2-3, with the placement of the pair in the Garden of Eden and their subsequent expulsion from the garden, has raised numerous problems of literary analysis and evoked a wide range of responses in biblical scholarship[1]. Many attempts have been made at reconstructing the primitive form of the myth, or myths, that lie behind the present literary account. But these efforts have been frustrated by the fact that until now no very close parallel has been found for the story of Gen 2 - 3 as a whole, even though many suggestions have been offered about the various details of the story. This is in marked contrast to the flood account in Genesis where a very similar story exists in a number of versions of the Babylonian flood epic. In the classic version of the Atrahasis Epic the flood even follows an account of the creation of mankind but the Babylonian treatment of creation has little in common with the Genesis presentation[2]. This has not prevented some scholars from trying to read the biblical account as a version of the Babylonian epic but with little success[3]. Nor is there any greater success in looking to the Ugaritic myths or among the rieh lore of the classical world.

In this general absence of any extensive parallels scholars have resorted to a number of different strategies to try to reconstruct the myth of man's creation based upon the many possible biblical allusions to man's origin and primordial Status vis a vis the deity. One approach is the »patternist« comparative method of older Scandinavian biblical scholarship, which seeks to outline the broad ideological pattern of common Near Eastern mythology on which the individual presentations are based.

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[1] For survey of the literature and a detailed treatment of the text see e C. Westermann, Genesis 1 — 11, BKAT I/1, 2nd ed. 1976. In the English translation of 1984 the discussion is on pp. 178 - 278. See also O. H. Steck, Die Paradieserzahlung. Eine Auslegung von Genesis 2,4b-3,24, in: Wahrnehmungen Gottes im Alten Testament. Gesammelte Studien, TB 70, 1982, 9-116

[2] See the edition by W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, Atra-HHasTs. The Babylonian Story of the Flood, 1969.

[3] Cf. R. A. Oden, Divine Aspirations in Atrahasis and in Genesis l - 11, ZAW 93 (1981), 197-216; also W. M. Clark, The Flood and the Structure of the Pre-patriarchal History, ZAW 83 (1971), 184-211.

This approach assumes a primitive myth to which all the texts, early or late, are somehow related so that each may contribute something to its final reconstruction. Thus, for example, I. Engnell sees in the account of man's creation the mythology of sacral kingship[4]. The details of the story in Gen 2 — 3 are viewed primarily in this light and the royal motifs of Gen 1, Ez 28 and PS 8 play a dominant role in the Interpretation. By contrast Aage Bentzen, using the same texts, suggests that »Primordial Man« is the primary category and that kingship and messianism are to be interpreted by means of it[5]. T. D. N. Mettinger attempts a mediating position between the two views[6]. He suggests the in Gen 1 and Ps 8 the creation of mankind is described in royal categories but in Ez 28 the king is identified as *Urmensch*.

A patternist comparative approach is also taken by H. N. Wallace in his recent study of Gen 2-3[7], but unlike the above scholars he excludes consideration of Gen 1 and Ps 8[8]. His method assumes that J made use of poetic epic traditions passed down over many generations and composed his work at the point of transition from oral literature to written composition early in the monarchy. The traditional material is identified by the use of a wide range of parallels from Mesopotamia and Ugarit as well as other biblical texts, even though the latter are dated several centuries later. This is particularly true of his use of Ez 28. What is lacking in this treatment is any sense of the tradition's development.

There is, however, a basic contradiction in the comparative approach that cannot be so easily dismissed. On the one hand, we have mankind, male and female, presented as fallen from »grace«, soon after creation, to their present condition of toil and pain. On the other hand, mankind is described in very lofty terms in PS 8 and Gen 1 with no hint of any subsequent fall. How can these two views be derived from a common myth? And how is one to understand the relationship between the creation of mankind in general, or primordial man, and the creation of the primordial king?

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[4] I. Engnell, >Knowledge< and >Life< in the Creation Story, Wisdom in Israel, SVT 3 (1955), 103-119; Die Urmenschvorstellung und das Alte Testament, SEA 22-23 (1957-58), 265-289.
[5] Messias. Mosesredivivus. Menschensohn, AThANT 17, 1948, translated in English as King and Messiah, 2nd ed. 1970. See in ET 39-47.
[6] King and Messiah, CBOT 8, 1976, 268-275
[7] The Eden Narrative, HSM 32, 1985.
[8] In his treatment of Ez 28,12 -19 Wallace says nothing about the creation of the king and deals only with the mention of Eden, the garden of God, 82 ff.

A quite different approach is that of tradition history which seeks to recover the successive stages in the development of a particular story, such as Gen 2-3. Beginning with H. Gunkel and J. Begrich[9] and culminating in the commentary of C. Westermann[10] there has been a strong tendency to identify two quite separate traditions in Gen 2-3 that have been combined by J, i. e., a creation story and a paradise story. But such a reconstruction has recently been challenged by O. H. Steck and E. Kutsch[11]. Steck found evidence of only one earlier story, that of the paradise tale (Paradiesgeschichte), to which J added and adapted other traditional materials. Kutsch, however, even disputed this possibility and merely regarded the Yahwist as the originator of the whole story, based upon a variety of traditional motives and materials.

While the works of Steck and Kutsch are, in my view, an important advance in the research of Gen 2 — 3, what is still needed in the traditio-historical discussion for any further progress is some way to come to terms with the complexity of the J story, i. e., a suitable starting point by which to order the biblical traditions. Recently a new Babylonian text on creation has come to light that may provide the necessary clue to working out these problems. But before we discuss it, we need to turn our attention to Ezekiel 28 which will prove to be the pivotal text in the discussion.

The Creation of the King: Ezekiel 28

The most important comparative material for trying to reconstruct the history of the tradition of Gen 2 — 3 is the oracle against Tyre in Ez 28,12-19[12]. Already Gunkel had suggested that the myth behind Ezekiel 28 was older than the Gen 2-3 account which represented a somewhat »demythologized« version of the other[13]. The account

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[9] H. Gunkel, Genesis, 3rd ed. 1910, 1-40; J. Begrich, Die Paradieserzahlung. Eine literargeschichtliche Studie, ZAW 50 (1932), 93-116

[10] See note 1 above.

[11] Steck, Wahrnehmungen Gottes, 35-58; and E. Kutsch, Die Paradieserzahlung Genesis 2-3 und ihr Verfasser, in Studien zum Pentateuch (FS W. Kornfeld), 1977, 9-24.

[12] For a recent review of research on this text see R. R. Wilson, The Death of the King of Tyre: The Editorial History of Ezekiel 28, in: Love and Death in the Ancient Near East, Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope, 1987, 211-218

[13] Genesis, 35; a position which J. L. McKenzie found difficult to explain (Myths and Realities, Studies in Biblical Theology, 1963, 154f.). See further his discussion, Note on the Mythological Allusions in Ez 28:12-18, ibid., 175-181.

in Ezekiel 28 presents us with a person who was a special creation by the deity, »the signet of perfection, füll of wisdom, and perfect in beauty« (v. 12)[14]. The figure was given royal honors including special vestments with jewelled pectoral or breastplate. The abode of this person was in Eden, the garden of God, on the holy mountain in the Company of a guardian cherub and among the mysterious »stones of fire« (minor deines?)[15]. He was blameless until sin was discovered in him, that of pride or hubris because of his beauty and wisdom. The consequences of this discovery is expulsion from paradise[16].

Now it has been tempting for some scholars to greatly expand on this base in Ez 28,12-19 by the association of other texts and themes with it, but this may not be entirely legitimate. The oracle in 28,2 -10 is an obvious example of this since it is easy to see some similarity in the description of the king's wisdom which leads to hubris and his downfall and destruction. But Pope has made the case that behind this oracle

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[14] On the problems of translation see Wilson, Death of the King of Tyre, 214-215.

[15] This summary follows the usual translation and Interpretation of the difficult text in v. 14-16. However, Mettinger (King and Messiah, 270 ff.) proposes a somewhat different rendering:

> You were the anointed cherub, shadowing widely,
> and I placed you on the mountain (reading *bāhār*).
> You were the holy property of God;
> you walked among the stones of fire.

The last sentence in v. 16 he renders as: »and I banished you, you overshadowing cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.« In this way Mettinger sees the king as identified with the cherub as the term anointed (*mimšah*) would suggest. But the references to cherubim in the rest of the OT makes this proposal hard to accept. In Genesis, man in the garden is also quite distinct from the cherubim.

[16] See R. R. Wilson, The Death of the King of Tyre, 211-218. Wilson notes that in Ez 28,12 -19 the king of Tyre has certain features in common with the High Priest of Jerusalem and contains themes that occur in some of EzekiePs earlier oracles against the temple. Thus, the pectoral with precious stones (v. 13) resembles that of the high priest (Ex 28,17-20; 39,10-13). The »holy mountain« is also a term used for the temple. The »stones of fire« may refer to the »coals of fire« on the altar. The charge of corruption of the sanctuaries (v. 18) is a common accusation Ezekiel makes against the priesthood (5,11; 21,7; 23,38.39; 25,3). On this bas'is Wilson suggcsts that tKc oracle was originally directed at the priesthood (in which case the references to trade in v. 16 and 18 would have been later additions supplied from the oracles against Tyre in chapter 27), or at least he had the high priest in mind in the guise of an oracle against the king of Tyre. While the proposal is persuasive it nevertheless has some serious problems with it. First, it is hard to tie the high priest to the mythological figure in Eden and to his creation in primeval times. This primeval myth is closely associated with the other elements that Wilson links to the priesthood. Furthermore, it seems quite likely that it was only with the demise of kingship that the high priest became clothed with royal insignia so that it is doubtful that the jeweled pectoral could be part of the priestly apparrel in Ezekie's day.

lies the myth of the fallen god El[17] and that is quite different from the creation myth of 28,12- 19.

That the figure in Ez 28,12 -19 represents the primeval, and therefore prototypical, king is very likely. But there is nothing in this oracle to suggest the he is divine or that he is the first man (*Urmensch*)[18]. The myth used by Ezekiel could have represented an etiology for royalty but nothing in it suggests that it has to do with man in general. It is also not clear that the original myth included the notion of sin and a fall or expulsion from paradise. There are a number of biblical texts that seem to reflect a primordial, heavenly king — the first creation — who remained the prototype of all royal authority[19]. Can we find any nonbiblical tradition that may throw some light on this matter?

A recently published Neo-Babylonian mythical text contains a description of the creation of mankind in the tradition of Atrahasis[20]. This is the creation of common humanity (*lullu - men*) whose purpose it i to do the labor of the gods. But quite different from these earlier texts the myth also states that the divine pair of the mother goddess and Ea are to make a king quite distinct from the rest of humanity. The text states the following:

> Ea began to speak, he directed his word to Belet-ili, »Belet-ili, Mistress of the great gods, are you. You have created the common people, now construct the king, distinctively superior persons. With goodness envelop his entire being. Form his features harmoniously;make his body beautiful!« Thus did Belet-ili construct the king, distinctively superior persons. The great gods gave the king the task of warfare. Anu gave him the crown; Enlil gave him the throne. Nergal gave him weapons; Ninurta gave him glistening splendor. Belet-ili gave him a beautiful appearance. Nusku gave him instruction and counsel and Stands at his service.

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[17] M. H. Pope, El in the Ugaritic Texts, 1955, 97-103. Isa 14,3-20 also Stands closer to this tradition than to a creation myth.

[18] This assumption is made on the basis of the similarity with Gen 2-3. See Mettinger, King and Messiah, 272; also H. G. May, The King in the Garden of Eden: A Study of Ezekiel 28:12-19, Israel's Prophetic Heritage, ed. by B. W. Anderson and W. Harrelson, 1962, 166-176; N. C. Habel, Ezekiel 28 and the Fall of the First King, CTM38 (1967), 516-524.

[19] For a bibliography of relevant works see Wilson, Death of the King of Tyre, 213, no. 10. See esp. the discussions by H. G. May (n. 18) and McKenzie (n. 13).

[20] W. R. Mayer, Ein Mythos von der Erschaffung des Menschen und des Königs, Or 56 (1987), 55-68. On Atrahasis see above n. 2.

Much of the language of this part of the text corresponds directly to that found in royal inscriptions, royal hymns and coronation rituals, which have a long tradition in Mesopotamia[21]. In these texts the king is often spoken of as created or formed in the womb by the deity and given various royal attribues of wisdom, strength and beauty by the different gods of the pantheon[22]. At the king's coronation the gods are likewise said to participate together in entrusting to the king the various insignia of his royal office: throne, vestments, scepter, etc. What is remarkable about this mythical text is that the bestowal of physical endowments at birth and the regalia at the coronation have both beencombined and then placed mythologically back into the time of creation itself as a way of expressing the inception of kingship. By the use of such texts in this way the author of the myth has moved from the particular legitimation of individual kings to the general legitimation of kingship itself. And he has expanded the myth of the creation of mankind to include the special creation of the king.

This Babylonian myth makes it entirely clear, therefore, that behind the biblical texts of Genesis, Ps 8 and Ez 28 there are two quite distinctive conceptions of creation, that of the creation of mankind to do the hard labor of the gods, and that of the creation of the king who rules the common people in splendor as a superior being and agent of the gods. There is no basis for reconstructing a primitive myth about an Urmensch who is the origin and patriarch of both mankind in general and the king in particular.

Evidence that the Babylonian text is a late mythological composition can be seen from the fact that its closest linguistic parallels are to be found in late Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian texts[23]. In fact the author of the text clearly indicates his source when he ends with the oath: »Whoever speaks falsehood and deceit to the king ...«, an oath formula that is a direct parallel to a concluding coronation oath in a prayer of

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[21] Mayer, ibid., 63 f. For this comparative material see »Insignien«, »Inthronisation« and »Investitur« in: RLA V, 1976-80, 109-114, 128-136, 138-144; »Königtum. B» RLA VI, 1980-83, #89-92, 101, pp. 166-167, 170.

[22] In addition to the sources in n. 21 above see also M.-J. Seux, Epithetes royales akkadiennes et sumeriennes, 1967, see under banü B, 51 — 52, and saraku, 291 — 292; H. Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods, 1948, 237-240, 299-301; J. H. Tigay, The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic, 1982, 153 —158, esp. the text of Ashurbanipal on p. 154.

[23] Mayer, Ein Mythos von der Erschaffung, 63 ff.

Ashurbanipal[24]. This rather firm late dating becomes important when we turn back to consider the biblical tradition.

In the account of the creation of the king in Ez 28,12-19 the Babylonian text resembles Ezekiel in one respect and in another it is quite different. The resemblance lies in the fact that the king is created with wisdom, beauty and the vestments of royalty (v. 12—13.17) as in the Babylonian myth. It is quite significant that Ezekiel 28 includes references to both the royal qualities of wisdom and beauty as well as the king's regalia, given to the king at his creation, just as we have it in the Babylonian myth. This makes it most probable that Ezekiel is dependent upon the Babylonian tradition.

The Babylonian myth, however, says nothing about the primeval iniquity or fall of the king from favor. That would go entirely counter to the royal ideology which the text clearly Supports. Nor is anything said about a setting in paradise. Instead, the purpose of the king's creation in the Babylonian myth is to rule the mass of humanity that the gods have previously created. Yet it may be pointed out that in the Babylonian New Year's festival during which the kingship was renewed the king had to lay aside his insignia and make a negative confession of sin in the presence of the high priest before he could continue in office[25]. Furthermore, the Babylonian kings had great royal pleasure gardens often resembling mountains as in the case of Nebuchadrezzar's »hanging gardens«, planted with many exotic and fruit-bearing trees from Syria[26]. So it is easy to see from their Babylonian sources how all these ideas could be closely associated.

In his oracle Ezekiel has combined the myth of the king's creation with the notion about his primordial abode on the divine mountain, represented as a pleasure garden[27], and the theme of the king's deposition because of sin. However, there is no evidence of a myth that teils about the expulsion of some primeval being from paradise[28]. This must be explained as Ezekiel's own introduction of a prophetic theme of judgment into

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[24] Ibid., 65.
[25] RLA V, 112; Frankfort, Kingship, 320.
[26] See D. J. Wiseman, Mesopotamian Gardens, Anatolian Studies 33 (1983), 137-144; also M. Hutter, Adam als Gartner und König (Gen 2,8.15), BZ 30 (1986), 258-262.
[27] On the meaning of Eden see A. R. Millard, The Etymology of Eden, VT 34 (1984), 103-106.
[28] Some like Westermann (Genesis 1 — 11, 246 f.) see such a parallel in the Adapa myth. The similarity, however, must be viewed as very weak. Cf. B. Kienast, Die Weisheit des Adapa von Eridu, Symbolae Biblicae et Mesopotamicae Fr. M. Th. de Liagre Bohl Dedicatae, 1973,234-239.

the picture, namely, the *hubris* of kings and nations that leads to their downfall[29]. This theme, cast back into primordial times, creates an anti-royal ideology, suggesting that *hubris* is the fatal flaw of all kings. Note that precisely at this point Ezekiel shifts from primeval time to talk about the present reality of Tyre's trade, its humiliation before other kings and the destruction of the city. This is a prophetic transformation of the myth of royalty.

The Creation of Mankind: Genesis 2 - 3

The comparison of Gen 2-3 with the mythical background of the Ezekiel oracle is significant not only for its similarities but also for the further transformations in Genesis. It is a mistake to try to derive both accounts from a common original. The similarities lie in the fact that the created being is placed in Eden, the garden of God from which, after his sin is discovered, he is expelled. As suggested above, this scenario seems to be Ezekie's own invention which was taken over by the Yahwist. However, the royal figure of Ezekiel has lost all aspects of royalty in Genesis[30] and become a human pair. They do not have royal vestments but are naked and only clothed by the deity when expelled from the garden[31]. They do not have wisdom until after they disobey the divine command and eat the fruit, and this is not presented as an act of *hubris* so much as the result of youthful curiosity. The sin itself and its discovery is greatly expanded as a story element in the Genesis account.

It is important to notice that in two respects the Gen 2-3 account also resembles the quite separate oracle of Ez 28,2-10. The first is in the close association of wisdom with deity. It is on the basis of his wisdom that the king of Tyre makes his claim to divinity. That seems to correspond closely with the fact that the fruit of the tree of knowledge gives the human pair in Genesis a likeness to deity. At the same time this claim to wisdom in Ezekiel brings with it the judgment of death which is a negation of the king's divinity. In Genesis the judgment of death is also associated with eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, but it is only in the denial of the tree of life that this is

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[29] Isa 10,5 - 19; 14,5-20. This is also the dominant theme in the oracles against Pharaoh and Egypt in Ez 29-32.

[30] Except perhaps in his naming of the animals (see l Reg 4,33) and in his association with a garden of pleasure (Eden).

[31] For a quite different Interpretation of the clothing of mankind see Robert A. Oden, The Bible without Theology, 1987, 94-105. However, it is debatable whether his parallels from Near Eastern sources are relevant or whether clothing is ever used to distinguish mankind from deity as he suggests.

carried out. Instead, the punishment of expulsion from the second Ezekiel oracle is used. This seems to be a case in which motifs from two different but closely juxtaposed oracles become the sources for motifs in the Genesis story even though they cause some tension within the composition of the Yahwist.

In this way the Yahwist has completely transformed the elements of myth from both Ezekiel oracles for his own purposes. The wisdom that led to sin has become the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the occasion for disobedience. The royal figure now becomes humanity in general, represented by the first pair. The royal vestments are the clothing given after the fall[32]. The cherub, which has no significance in the garden in Genesis, is retained in the expulsion scene as guardian of the tree of life. The death threat remains in Genesis but not its execution.

In terms of the broader history of tradition the Yahwist in Gen 2-3 has combined the tradition of the creation of mankind to do the labor of the gods[33], as in the Atrahasis Epic, with that of Ezekiel's king in the garden of God who is expelled because of sin. It is the reason why the creation of mankind as a larger population mass in the Mesopotamian tradition has become a single pair in Genesis[34].

With the new Babylonian text we can now clearly trace the development of the tradition from the dual Babylonian creation themes, first to Ezekie's expansion of the creation of the king motif, then to the Yahwist's combination of both with the explicit use of Ezekiel. It is scarcely possible to argue for a development in any other direction. Such a combination can only mean that Gen 2 - 3 is a rather late exilic text.

Concerning Gen 1,26-28 and Ps 8 it has been clear for some timethat the reprcsentation of the creation of mankind in these texts is dominated by royal ideology[35]. But what has not been so clear is howthis relates to the theme of creation. With the new Babylonian text, however, it becomes virtually conclusive that the Priestly Writer has democratized the myth of the creation of the king in order to apply it to mankind in general. In this way mankind is created to be the ruler of the rest of creation. Furthermore, the reference to the plurality of deity in the act of the creation

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[32] Perhaps the precious metals and gems are reflected in the little geography of Gen 2,10-14.
[33] Note the two points of narrative tension and resolution: »there was no man to till the ground« (2,5) and »to till the ground from which he was taken« (3,23)
[34] As Kutsch has observed (Die Paradieserzahlung, 20), the Mesopotamian texts speak of people being created in various numbers but never of a single pair.
[35] For a history of the discussion of the Genesis text see Westermann 1 — 11, 147- 155.

of mankind specificially: »Let us make mankind in our image …« corresponds exactly with the fact that in the Babylonian tradition all of the deities together lend their aid in the creation of the king, as noted above, and not just a single creator deity. The Priestly Writer does not depend upon an ancient tradition but upon a theological formulation that must have been developed in the exilic period, if not in Babylon itself.

In later Judaism, wherever messianism persisted, the distinction between the primordial king with divine attributes and the rest of mankind is reintroduced, as in the Babylonian tradition. His role is both to rule and to save the rest of humanity and this is developed extensively in later christology. But that is another subject[36].

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[36] On this subject see Bentzen, King and Messiah; and S. Mowinckel, He That Cometh, 1956. The latter insists that the notion of primordial man does not arise in Israel until quite late, pp. 420ff.